



THE CONFERENCE

The conference, organized by the Vatican Museums, aims to promote a high-level reflection on the issues of mass tourism management and the programmed preservation of the cultural heritage, two among the most urgent challenges of the third millennium. The protagonists will be the directors of the world's major museums who have agreed to describe their operational strategies or the specific cases they faced in light of their role. From the comparison between the various instances and situations, similarities and differences as well as critical points and opportunities will emerge: a network of observation points and concrete activities useful to define what could become the future guidelines for museums and institutions interested in the issues of preventive conservation.

THE PROTAGONISTS

By accepting the invitation of Barbara Jatta, Director of the Vatican Museums and “host”, and Salvatore Settis, an internationally renowned scholar and an attentive observer of the Italian cultural heritage, the directors of many important museums – both European and non – will have the opportunity to discuss the common exciting theme. Participants include Jean-Luc Martinez from the Musée du Louvre, Gabriele Finaldi from the National Gallery in London, Laurent Salomé from the Musée National du Château de Versailles, Mikhail B. Piotrovskiy from the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Miguel Falomir Faus from the Prado Museum and Timothy Potts from the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

Italy will be represented by two personalities different in age, training and experience: Antonio Paolucci – Director of the Vatican Museums from 2007 to 2016 – who has a long history of responsibility in the public administration as well as in the protection and dissemination of the cultural heritage, and Christian Greco from the Museo Egizio in Turin, exponent of a new generation of directors with an international “profile”.

During the conference, a considerable space to the debate will be given, in which representatives of national and international associations and institutions such as ICOM, IIC, ICCROM and the

directors of institutes of higher education such as ISCR and OPD, ICRCPAL will take part.

ADDRESSEES OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference is addressed to museum directors, officials in charge of the protection and management of cultural institutions, conservation and restoration specialists, universities and institutes of higher education, the world of culture, the press and public opinion. To all those who think maintenance is not a useless cost, but rather a good investment.

NEW STRATEGIES FOR THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

With six million visitors a year, the “philosophy” of conservation inevitably changes.

The Vatican Museums are a system comparable in size and number of visitors to the largest museums in the world but with spaces, architectures and functions that are absolutely unique. In addition to the collections – more than 100.000 movable artworks of every period, origin or material – exhibited in a multitude of courtyards, halls, corridors and narrow passages connecting different buildings, the rooms themselves - together with the chapels, the Renaissance apartments of the popes, the galleries decorated with famous frescoes - constitute the purpose and objective of the visit of an increasingly demanding and growing public.

The need to preserve at best the immense and fragile cultural heritage and to deal effectively with the problems of anthropic pressure, led the Directorate of Museums to insert in the *Regolamento* of 2008 the Office of the Conservator with the task of “working in synergy with the other laboratories and departments to provide suggestions for the prevention of the risks of degradation and for the development of protocols to monitor and maintain the historical-artistic and archaeological heritage”.

In order for such a museum to become a system more and more capable of ensuring the good preservation of the artworks and of the precious rooms over time, the global approach of Preventive Conservation must be translated into systematic operational plans and targeted management policies.

The new “philosophy” of the Directorate of the Vatican Museums shows an effective synergy between scientific and administrative areas, the latter guaranteeing the necessary financial resources.

The operational model adopted by the Vatican Museums is a multi-lane system where – alongside the traditional restoration activi-

ties – the care of the exhibition environments, the regular execution of the programmed maintenance plans of collections, systems and settings effectively interact.

Today the Pope’s museums can count on a staff that supervises the cultural heritage exhibited or stored in over 40 storage areas and takes care of the systematic environmental and climatological monitoring in the exhibition, conservation and work spaces. The conservation strategy also develops throughout daily operations involving collections and itineraries - such as the meticulous removal of dust, the regular and systematic control of the movable artworks and the timely repair of small damages - carried out by a team of external restorers, especially trained and operating under programmes coordinated by the Office for Preventive Conservation.

THE VALUE OF TRADITION

The strategy of the programmed conservation of the Vatican Museums is rooted in the ancient tradition of preservation implemented by the popes and in the regular care of the cultural heritage that anticipates the concept of museum itself.

Through the study of the documents kept in the Historical Archive of the Museums, it was possible to trace the starting point for that strategy and retrace its path, recreating the most flourishing periods but also the darkest moments.

Today, the conservation of the cultural heritage – which draws its strength from the past – requires synergy and regularity of application, scientifically tested protocols, the commitment of properly trained professionals, verification of results and certainty of funding.

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

During the conference, the volume *The Conservation of the Vatican Museums. A Ten-year Project Completed* will be presented, which is the recent English version of *Come si conserva un grande museo. L’esperienza dei Musei Vaticani* published by Musei Vaticani-Allemandi in 2016. The manual, which illustrates the programs, methods and activities of programmed conservation in use at the Vatican Museums, was written to share the “path” pursued to date together with the institutions involved in the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage. There will also be a small scientific bookshop at the conference venue, so as to offer the possibility to consult the most recent publications in the field of preventive conservation selected by the directors of the participating museums.